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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-fourth session

Summary record of the 1407th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 7 July 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Hayashi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Myanmar (CEDAW/C/MMR/4-5; CEDAW/C/MMR/Q/4-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Myanmar took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Maung Wai** (Myanmar), introducing his country's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/MMR/4-5), said that, in Myanmar, men and women enjoyed equal rights in all areas. Women's rights were guaranteed and protected by the Constitution and other relevant laws. Women seldom encountered social barriers to education, employment or career development owing to the virtual absence of discriminatory traditions and practices in the country. However, although women's participation in parliament had increased, the overall number of women in decision-making positions remained very low — a situation explained in part by the fact that many women prioritized caring for their families over furthering their careers. The Government was therefore in the process of adopting legislative and policy measures to address the obstacles hindering women's participation in political and public life.

3. A series of reforms aimed at transforming Myanmar into a fully democratic country with greater freedoms and respect for human rights had been under way since 2011. The promotion and protection of human rights featured high on the agenda of the newly elected Government and in April 2016 the President had granted amnesty to some 200 political prisoners in the spirit of national reconciliation.

4. The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement had been signed by eight ethnic armed groups in October 2015 and the newly elected Government was committed to negotiating a ceasefire with the remaining groups. The next Union Peace Conference was scheduled to take place in August 2016. Female parliamentarians were actively involved in the preparatory work for the Conference and there were plans to organize a forum for civil society organizations to ensure that their views and suggestions were taken into account.

5. A newly formed legislative reform commission had begun the task of reviewing over 140 domestic laws. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement had taken the lead in drafting a bill on the prevention of gender-based violence that was currently being examined by the Attorney General's Office and would then be submitted to parliament for further debate.

6. The recent reforms had led to greater enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association, and a particularly marked increase in media freedom. As of 2012, publications were no longer subject to censorship and, since 2013, the number of private daily newspapers published in the country had risen considerably. The lack of restriction on the use of the Internet and social media platforms was resulting in more and more people using such services. A law on peaceful gatherings and processions, which allowed the people of Myanmar to exercise their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to organize peaceful demonstrations, had been in force since 2012.

7. The Government acknowledged the role played by NGOs and encouraged their activities. The law on the registration of organizations had been enacted in 2014 and, at present, over 800 national NGOs and civil society organizations were operating throughout the country.

8. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement had overseen the drafting of the country's periodic report and had set up a special drafting committee comprising

representatives of other government ministries, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, NGOs and civil society organizations. The Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs had also been given the opportunity to provide input.

9. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that the National Committee for Women's Affairs, which was headed by the Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, served as the national machinery for the advancement of women, responsible for mainstreaming women's rights in government policies and coordinating the various government programmes designed to improve their situation. The Committee met twice a year to review those programmes and ensure that policies and guidelines met the needs of women on the ground. Following a recent restructure, the Committee had become directly responsible for, inter alia, reviewing existing laws and regulations and drafting new laws and regulations designed to achieve gender equality in the political, economic and social spheres; preventing all forms of violence against women; raising women's awareness of the laws protecting them; and overseeing implementation of the policies and principles advocated at the World Conferences on Women and in the Convention. The membership of the reformed Committee included representatives of parliament, the National Human Rights Commission and women's NGOs.

10. The newly elected Government had made addressing harmful social and cultural practices one of its priorities. In addition, gender equality for development was among the national priorities identified by the State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, at a recent meeting of the International Development Association. At that meeting, she had called upon international development partners to assist Myanmar in translating its national priorities into reality by providing technical and capacity-building assistance, as well as material support.

11. The aim of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women for the period 2013-2022 was to empower all women in Myanmar to exercise their rights fully, with the support of the Government and enabling systems, structures and practices. Effective implementation of the plan would ensure that goals for gender equality and women's rights were embedded in the Government's reform agenda and that gender equality was mainstreamed in sectoral policies and programmes adopted by the Government and NGOs. A meeting to review and improve the implementation of the plan was likely to take place in the near future.

12. The Gender Equality Network, which included over 100 women's groups, had conducted a series of research studies into issues such as the drivers of gender inequality and gender-based violence. The Department of Social Welfare, in cooperation with UN-Women and the Asian Development Bank, had also performed an analysis of the situation with respect to gender equality and women's rights in Myanmar and was due to publish the findings of that exercise in the near future.

13. The Gender Equality Network and the United Nations Gender Theme Group were assisting the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in drafting the bill on the prevention of gender-based violence, which was in line with the provisions of the Convention and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Department of Social Welfare's activities were focused on preventing acts of sexual violence from occurring, as the Department lacked the capacity to receive and handle complaints from the public. However, in an effort to remedy that shortcoming, it was working to set up a national emergency helpline and a public advice centre in the region of Yangon. A national information and support centre for victims of trafficking was already in operation.

14. The new Government had set up a special committee tasked with maintaining stability and promoting development in Rakhine State, which was headed by the State Counsellor. The Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement chaired the working

committee set up to restore peaceful relations between the Rohingya Muslim and ethnic Rakhine communities and to resolve the situation in that State.

15. While Myanmar had made significant progress in advancing the rights of women since becoming a State party to the Convention in 1997, it continued to face many challenges. The Government remained committed to eliminating gender-based discrimination and to promoting and protecting the rights of all women living in the national territory, including the rural women whose plight had often been overlooked in the past.

Articles 1 and 6

16. **Ms. Patten** said that the State party was to be commended for the wide-ranging reforms that it had undertaken to facilitate the country's transition to democracy. She asked whether there was a time frame for revising laws such as the Penal Code and the electoral and citizenship laws which contained provisions discriminatory to women, and for adopting pending legislation such as the anti-discrimination bill and the bill on the prevention of gender-based violence.

17. Noting with regret that the State party had not implemented the Committee's previous recommendations that it should incorporate in the Constitution a strong substantive equality guarantee, a comprehensive definition of discrimination and a provision establishing the direct applicability of the Convention and its primacy over domestic legislation in case of conflict, and that it should consider adopting temporary special measures, she asked why those recommendations had not been taken up in the constitutional reform bill submitted to parliament in June 2015. She also wished to know whether the anti-discrimination bill included a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention and whether the State party planned to remove the constitutional provision that effectively permitted gender-based discrimination in the appointment of civil servants if the position in question was deemed suitable for men only, as well as the repeated references to women as mothers, which could serve to reinforce gender stereotypes.

18. It would also be useful to hear about any steps taken by the State party to guarantee access to justice for women, particularly women whose human rights had been violated and minority women; to combat the stigmatization faced by victims of sexual and gender-based violence; and to address the structural issues affecting the independence of the judiciary and legal professionals.

19. The Committee would have liked to receive more information on the impact of the armed conflict on women in Myanmar and on the State party's approach to guaranteeing the human rights of women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. She drew the delegation's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, which clearly set out States parties' obligations in that regard.

20. Lastly, she asked what measures were in place to prevent forced displacement, to protect the human rights of internally displaced persons, including Rohingya women, and to guarantee access to basic services for such persons.

21. **Ms. Pomeranzi**, noting that the State party had acknowledged the serious shortcomings in the conceptualization, content and implementation of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women for the period 2013-2022 and had indicated a readiness to make due adjustments, asked what it had done, or planned to do, to allow for the fact that the plan was underpinned by the 2008 Constitution, which contained provisions that ran counter to the Convention. Her impression was that effective implementation of the plan was impeded by the lack of a coordinating mechanism and the

limited number of actionable measures, and that its lengthy timespan made allocating sufficient funds difficult. Those deficiencies begged the question as to whether the plan was in fact the most effective tool for advancing women's rights in Myanmar. Given that the plan was the cornerstone of its gender equality policy, the State party needed to endow it with adequate funding. It would be useful to receive information on the budgetary resources that had been allocated to the plan to date, and on the role played by the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs in implementing it, particularly following the Committee's restructure.

22. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that the newly restructured Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs would be responsible for overseeing all women's development activities nationwide and serving as a liaison between the government and NGO sectors. The Committee would be working with the Government to identify ways to improve the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women and ensure full coverage of the country's obligations under the Convention, as well as to determine funding sources and agree appropriate budget allocations. The State party would require technical assistance in order to develop effective gender-sensitive budgeting systems.

23. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the more than 140 laws under review by the new legislative reform commission included a number of labour-related laws. She wished to highlight, however, that the purpose of section 352 of the Constitution, which referred to positions suitable for men only, was not to discriminate against women but to protect them from hazardous working conditions. For example, women workers were not permitted to lift heavy loads or to handle hazardous machinery such as spinning or weaving machines.

24. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that the law on the protection of women's and children's rights was currently being reviewed with input from various government ministries, NGOs and the Attorney General's Office and that a new draft should be ready for parliamentary discussion and approval in the very near future.

25. **Ms. Naw Tha Wah** (Myanmar) said that the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs was closely involved in the legislative review process, as well as in policy development. Together with the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, it had been tasked, inter alia, with carrying out awareness-raising campaigns to inform women of their rights and ensuring compliance with international obligations on gender equality.

26. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the new law on the rights of persons with disabilities, enacted in 2015, was based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and provided for the introduction of a disability certification system. Corresponding by-laws were being developed with the involvement of various ministries, NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities.

27. She wished to clarify that, while the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs and the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation were the national oversight and implementation bodies responsible for ensuring compliance with international instruments on women's rights, numerous other NGOs and civil society organizations participated in decisions concerning women.

28. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that, with assistance from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and UN-Women, two workshops had been organized to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Drawing on recommendations deriving from those workshops, an action plan for the resolution's implementation that would include gender-sensitive targets and indicators would be formulated in the near future. In implementation of the new Government's 100-day plan, training and psychosocial counselling were being provided to internally displaced persons in various camps throughout the country.

29. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that, to prevent and address impunity, complaints mechanisms had been established under the purview of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the President's Office to enable persons who felt that their rights had been violated to report the abuse suffered. In addition, under section 296 of the Constitution, citizens were entitled to petition the Supreme Court to issue writs of various forms.

30. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said she wished to add that the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs, the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, and the Women and Child Subcommittee were all competent to receive and address complaints related to the violation of women's rights, to refer victims to the relevant legal support services and to report cases to the police. A large number of complaints had been received, relating to a variety of alleged violations, including, in particular, gender-based discrimination and violence.

31. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that an important new law passed at the start of 2015 would ensure that legal aid was provided to all eligible persons without discrimination, with priority being given to impoverished women, children and persons with disabilities. The corresponding implementing regulations were in the drafting stage and legal aid organizations were being established throughout the country. Those organizations were required to submit their financing requests to the Supreme Court so that the corresponding funds could be allocated in the annual budget.

32. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that she was extremely concerned about the State party's failure to consolidate the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women for the period 2013-2022, as the plan was essential to the transformation of women's lives on the ground. She would like more information about NGOs' involvement in the plan's preparation. In the light of concerns that the National Human Rights Commission was not fully independent, as required under the Paris Principles, and that rules concerning the confidentiality of complaints were not always respected, she would like to know how the State party planned to address those autonomy and confidentiality issues.

33. **Ms. Patten** said that, while she appreciated that fixing a precise time frame for the enactment of new legislation was difficult, she would like to know what level of priority had been accorded to the passage of the bills on gender-based discrimination and violence against women. It was crucial to expedite the constitutional reforms and ensure that they encompassed measures giving effect to the Committee's previous recommendations concerning, inter alia, the direct applicability of the Convention, the definition of discrimination against women and access to justice. She urged the State party to draw up a four-year plan to implement the Committee's concluding observations. The aforementioned constitutional provision that prevented women from being appointed to positions considered suitable for men only should be removed.

34. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao said she was concerned about reports that a police officer had approached a women's organization to question its members about their activities and solicit information about the whereabouts of one particular member, who was present at the Committee's current session in Geneva. She would appreciate confirmation that the person in question would not be exposed to any danger upon returning to the country.

35. She would also like to know what was being done to ensure effective implementation of the new law on legal aid, and what measures were in place to ensure that informal justice mechanisms based on customary law did not discriminate against women or contravene the Convention. She further enquired how access to justice could be guaranteed for all women, particularly those in remote areas and those from ethnic groups, and how women were informed of their legal rights. Lastly, she asked whether the State

party was considering ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention and accepting the amendment to article 20 (1).

36. **Mr. Maung Wai** (Myanmar), highlighting that the new Government had been in office for only three months, said that human rights issues, including the situation of internally displaced persons, and especially women, were a top priority on its agenda. He confirmed that no harm would come to the NGO representative about whom the police had apparently been seeking information. He also wished to note that the provisions of chapter eight of the Constitution imposed no restriction on women's employment. However, society was not yet ready to accept women as armed personnel in the armed forces, for example, and the State party was therefore not yet in a position to repeal such provisions.

37. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that the Government had held more than 30 consultation meetings with NGOs and civil society organizations while drafting the law on the prevention of gender-based violence.

38. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the National Human Rights Commission Act had been drafted with the help of international experts, including experts from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. While the Commission made public statements to disseminate information about cases, the delegation was not aware of any breaches in confidentiality.

39. The Government's current priority was the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to the involvement of children in armed conflict, but the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would be considered in due course.

40. As the new law on legal aid had entered into force in January 2016 only, the budget for its implementation had not yet been allocated. Legal aid organizations were being established and the corresponding by-laws were being drafted.

41. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that the process of drafting the by-laws would take about one year, counting from the date of the law's adoption. In the meantime, 18 legal aid organizations run by civil society organizations were available to support women and children in need of such assistance.

42. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women would shortly be reviewed in collaboration with NGOs. The plan would set targets for time frames of one, three and five years. The Government hoped to reach a consensus with stakeholders regarding funding sources and the allocation of roles.

43. **Ms. Leinarte** asked what the role the Government would take in the civil society initiative to establish quotas for women in public life, and whether it would consider adopting temporary special measures to help Muslim and Rohingya women overcome the multiple forms of discrimination they faced.

44. **Ms. Acar** asked whether the Government had implemented any nationwide campaigns to raise awareness of violence against women, either through the media or through educational curricula; what percentage of the State budget was allocated to preventing violence against women; whether there had been a systematic review of the national legal framework to remove gender stereotypes; and whether any community-based efforts to alter mindsets had been initiated with a view to ensuring that the new bill on the prevention of gender-based violence did not meet the same resistance as the previous version. She also wished to receive information on the status of legal provisions on rape and marital rape, the services provided to rape victims, and the informal justice and reconciliation mechanisms available to women.

45. **Ms. Gabr**, noting that the State party had been downgraded to a tier 3 ranking in the United States of America Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, which ranked countries based on their efforts to meet minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, asked what the Government planned to do to tackle the many challenges it faced in that area; what time frame was envisaged for the review of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; and how the Government intended to reintegrate victims of trafficking and improve the services available to them. For example, were there any plans to establish a national referral mechanism to provide coordinated reintegration support and a programme to reduce the stigmatization faced by victims? And what steps had the Government taken to involve civil society organizations in awareness-raising activities and initiatives to prevent trafficking? She also wished to know how the Government monitored and evaluated the efficacy of its efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings; whether awareness-raising campaigns specifically targeted high-risk areas; and how the Government planned to address the root causes of trafficking. Information about efforts to address the issue of forced prostitution would likewise be appreciated. For example, what was the Government doing to prevent victims of sex trafficking from being treated as criminals and to reduce demand for commercial sex?

46. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that, in 2015, 693 women had been recruited to the armed forces as a result of temporary special measures. Between 2011 and 2016, the Myanmar Police Force had recruited 3,274 female employees, meaning that almost 6 per cent of its workforce were now women. Previously, female students had been required to obtain higher marks than their male peers in order to gain admission to university courses in medicine, but temporary special measures had reversed that anomaly. The Myanmar Women's Entrepreneur Association was working to increase the participation of women in economic life.

47. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that, in the 2015 elections, political parties had been instructed to give priority to candidates from underrepresented groups, including women, in the selection process. Microfinance programmes provided by actors including banks and NGOs were an important tool for the improvement of women's economic participation and to date had benefited 2.8 million people, 98 per cent of whom were women.

48. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that the new Government had already taken steps to strengthen the national mechanism for partnerships with NGOs and civil society organizations.

49. **Ms. Lynn Malar Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the committee overseeing preparations for the forthcoming Union Peace Conference and its two subcommittees together had a total of 45 members, 5 of whom were female.

50. **Mr. Min Kyaw Thu** (Myanmar) said that the proposal to review the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act had been submitted to the parliament in June 2016 and that the review would commence shortly. The Myanmar Police Force was developing community policing initiatives to deter traffickers, and the country was actively engaged in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

51. The Prostitution Act would be included in the upcoming review of legislation. While nearly 2,000 prostitution cases had been pursued in 2013, the number had dropped to 855 in 2015 and a further reduction was anticipated for 2016.

52. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that several international and national partners, including UN-Women, had been invited to participate in a series of parliamentary meetings called to ensure that gender stereotypes were addressed in the new Government's legislative review. The Women and Child Subcommittee would review six laws and

consider how all issues related to gender stereotypes could be reflected in the legal framework. Further training on gender issues would be arranged for parliamentarians in the coming months.

53. **Ms. Naw Tha Wah** (Myanmar) said that qualitative research had been undertaken into social and cultural norms and their impact on men and women in work, education, family life, development and other areas. Research into the cultural and religious practices of the many ethnic groups in Myanmar was also currently under way. The results of such research served to inform programmes and policies and had led to awareness-raising and dialogue initiatives. The media were used to disseminate information about discrimination against women, and public radio stations broadcast programmes for ethnic minority women in 14 languages, along with awareness-raising programmes for women nationwide.

54. A reproductive health programme for adolescents had been established in 80 townships and education on human rights and violence against women had been provided for almost 1 million military personnel. Allegations of sexual violence against women by the military were investigated, appropriate action was taken, and victims could apply for damages.

55. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that a central committee chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs had been established to address issues related to trafficking in human beings, along with a subcommittee that dealt with repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation. The Department of Social Welfare ran three shelters for female victims of trafficking, and vocational training was also available. Although the overall budget allocated to the Department represented less than 1 per cent of total public spending, in 2015, the central committee had allocated additional funds for victim rehabilitation, including life skills training. NGOs were also closely involved in support programmes of that kind.

56. **Mr. Min Kyaw Thu** (Myanmar) said that the police had established a number of anti-trafficking task forces whose role was to monitor groups potentially vulnerable to trafficking and prevent their exploitation or, in the case of former victims, their revictimization. Working with the Department of Social Welfare, the task forces also organized vocational training for former victims and vulnerable groups. Vocational training in skills such as sewing, knitting, weaving and cooking was also provided by the Ministry of Border Affairs.

57. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that a key goal of the National Strategic Plan for Social Protection was to establish a national social case management system that would eventually be used to monitor and manage all cases involving trafficking in human beings, especially woman. The plan also envisaged the provision of psychosocial support for victims to help them deal with any stigmatization issues. To provide that support, the Government worked in partnership with the NGO sector.

58. **Ms. Gabr** asked how impunity for traffickers would be tackled in future; whether referral mechanisms for cases of trafficking would be implemented; and how the authorities planned to assess the efficacy of the measures adopted.

59. **Ms. Leinarte**, noting that a number of the initiatives mentioned by the delegation as temporary special measures, such as the establishment of women's associations and the priority given to women on electoral lists, should be viewed as ongoing measures, asked whether the State party would consider adopting a quota of 30 per cent for women's representation in the parliament as a temporary special measure.

60. **Mr. Min Kyaw Thu** (Myanmar) said that any person who had reason to believe that traffickers in human beings or persons engaged in other criminal acts might be enjoying impunity could report their suspicions to the police using the public complaints hotline

numbers broadcast on television and radio or the standard police emergency number. All reports were investigated and appropriate action was taken. In addition, all law enforcement officers were required to adhere to a code of conduct.

61. **Ms. San San Aye** (Myanmar) said that temporary special measures had been used successfully in Shan State to provide education for 72 girls who could not otherwise afford to attend school and that 3 of those girls had recently won places at university. Vocational training in activities such as sewing and weaving was also provided for girls during the summer holidays.

62. **Ms. Naw Hla Hla Soe** (Myanmar) said that the percentage of women in parliament had increased threefold and was now over 13 per cent. Provided female candidates received sufficient capacity-building support, the 30 per cent target for female representation by 2020 should be achievable.

63. **Ms. Naw Tha Wah** (Myanmar) said that all forms of violence against women, including marital rape, were addressed in the new bill on the prevention of gender-based violence, which also established the responsibilities and roles of the various actors, and that community-level initiatives were being organized to promote awareness of such violence. The Department of Social Welfare provided shelter and services for women and girl victims and was working with NGOs to implement capacity-building programmes for police officers, the judiciary, social workers and medical staff.

Articles 7 to 9

64. **Ms. Leinarte**, noting that women's participation in political and public life remained very low, particularly in rural areas, and that there was a lack of disaggregated data for monitoring progress, asked whether any research into the barriers to women's participation had been undertaken and what measures were being used to encourage women to take on international and diplomatic roles. In view of women's underrepresentation in peace processes and negotiations, she wondered whether the Government planned to draft a national action plan on women in peace and security.

65. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao, referring to the concern expressed previously by the Committee regarding nationality and citizenship in Myanmar, said that the State party should assess how its Citizenship Law affected women, men, and children from different minority groups and use that information to bring the law into line with article 9 of the Convention.

66. According to reports, women in rural areas were often unable to acquire identity documents because of a lack of civil administration services nearby or a lack of money. She would like to know whether the Government had conducted any surveys to assess that situation and had considered simplifying the regulatory procedures and either reducing or waiving the processing fees for poor rural women.

67. The citizenship verification pilot programme in Rakhine State had reportedly failed to achieve significant improvements and there were concerns that the citizenship process was not transparent. More information on the programme, including the number of persons who had benefited to date, the measures envisaged to ensure open and transparent citizenship procedures and those adopted to ensure that children in Rakhine State were involved in the citizenship verification process and acquired citizenship, would therefore be appreciated. She also wished to know what steps would be taken to ensure that the goal of registering 1 million children over the coming year would be met; how many children in Myanmar were currently unregistered; and what steps had been taken to register children born in camps for internally displaced persons.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.